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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

[Sherry Hill](#), DSHS Public Affairs (360) 902-7892 or (360)485-8234

[Thomas Shapley](#), DSHS Public Affairs (360) 902-8007 or (360)628-1043

**Assistant Secretary for Children's Administration announced**

**Olympia** -- Today, Social and Health Services Secretary Susan N. Dreyfus named Denise Revels Robinson as assistant secretary for Children's Administration. Revels Robinson brings to Washington 40 years experience working in child welfare, most recently as executive policy advisor at the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. She served there for 12 years as director of the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, which was a state-run county child welfare system.

She will assume her new post on Oct. 19.

"I was seeking someone with a proven and passionate commitment to public child welfare," said Dreyfus, "and Denise Revels Robinson is that person: she understands the function of child welfare within the spectrum of social services and community. She is recognized and respected at both the state and national level as a leader in child welfare. Denise believes in ensuring that our system has the resources and partnerships we need for quality practices and better outcomes for every child every time."



Revels Robinson began her career as a child welfare case manager in New York City and Washington, D.C.

Her national experience includes several years serving as a federal consultant reviewer for Child and Family Services Review.

She served for five years as the director of the Family and Children's Services Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services, where she led and directed state public child welfare programs across a county-administered human services system. While in Minnesota, she also served on the adjunct faculty at the University of Minnesota, School of Social Work.

"Denise is clearly a passionate and proven leader in child welfare," Gov. Chris Gregoire said. "Our employees and communities throughout Washington will come to know her as a leader

who believes in them and who will work with them on behalf of the children and families we serve.”

Tom Corcoran, who worked with Revels Robinson for 11 years while he served as the local union president of AFSCME Local 2748 in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, said “Denise was willing to listen and consider the union members’ position,” Corcoran said. “She was able to work effectively with the union members on specific issues. She held management accountable and dealt directly with issues that were brought to her by the union. She was good to work with and would work collaboratively to resolve work force issues.”

“Denise is a solid child welfare leader who brings strong managerial and practice skills and knowledge to this most challenging position,” said Jess McDonald, currently serving on the Braam Oversight Panel. “She understands the complex nature of the child welfare system and has demonstrated an ability to improve child welfare system performance in the area of safety, permanency and well-being.” McDonald has known Revels Robinson for many years, and is the previous director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. The Braam Oversight Panel was created in 2004 to oversee a settlement agreement regarding Washington state’s foster care system.

During her tenure with Milwaukee County, starting in 1997, Revels Robinson led the way to safely reduce the number of children in out-of-home care from 6,800 to 2,600 by 2003 by accomplishing reunification of children with their families in 70 percent of cases, and 30 percent adopted within 24 months of entering foster care.

“I also want to thank Randy Hart for serving as Interim Assistant Secretary since January,” Dreyfus said. “Randy led Children’s Administration during a time of great transition and budget challenges. He has done a wonderful job.” Former Children’s Administration Assistant Secretary Cheryl Stephani retired in December 2008.

Revels Robinson’s national work includes serving on the Executive Committee of the national Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators in Washington, D.C. since 2004 and she has served on the Board of Directors, Black Administrators in Child Welfare since 2002.

Revels Robinson earned a Master of Social Work degree in 1983 from Howard University School of Social Work in Washington, D.C.; and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from West Virginia State University, Institute, West Virginia in 1969.

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## RESUME

Denise Revels Robinson

### EDUCATION

Master of Social Work, Howard University School of Social Work, Washington, D.C.;  
May 1983

Bachelor of Arts, Major: Sociology; West Virginia State University, Institute, West Virginia;  
May 1969

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

January 12, 2009- Present: Executive Policy Advisor, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (formerly Department of Health and Family Services); Division of Prevention and Service Integration

Serve as key policy advisor to the Division of Prevention and Service Integration; manage Departmental studies, programs, policy issues, and child welfare reform initiatives that impact the prevention of child abuse and neglect; lead and manage efforts to reduce racial disproportionality and racial disparities in Wisconsin's child welfare system; research and identify safe alternatives to formal involvement in the child welfare system; provide executive level liaison functions to support implementation of the vision of the Governor, Secretary, and Division Administrator through implementation of a planned, coordinated, integrated inter-departmental and statewide policy initiatives that impact Wisconsin children and families.

March 1997 – January 2009: Director, Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Managed take-over and reform of Milwaukee County child welfare system from county to state operation and administration; ensured consistent and effective quality services for families and children across all program areas including: child protective services, in-home services, adoption and out of home care; recruitment, licensing, support and training of foster and adoptive families; helped to negotiate, managed implementation and compliance with federally approved federal Settlement Agreement requirements and Corrective Action Plans; responded to media inquiries; provided community updates on agency progress, challenges and opportunities; in cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Social Welfare implemented part-time Master of Social Work Program for qualified Bureau staff, staff training and professional development program for new and tenured child welfare staff and managers; led efforts to maximize involvement, feedback, and partnerships with client consumers, community, special interest and advocacy groups, and public and private sector agencies; safely reduced out of home care placement of children by more than 50%, doubled use of in-home services to prevent removal from parental home; helped to write and led implementation of Title IV-E Waiver Program for Subsidized Guardianship Program in Milwaukee; recruited, supervised, evaluated executive team staff; convened monthly labor management meetings, enforced union contract provisions, settled grievances.

2001-2003; 2008: Consultant Reviewer, Federal Team, Child and Family Services Review

1995- February 1997: Adjunct Faculty, University of Minnesota, School of Social Work

Instructor for graduate level child welfare policy course for second year Master of Social Work students; co-developed and co-wrote course syllabus, lectured, evaluated students' work, submitted final grades; taught one section of the course using interactive distance learning technology in two out state sites.

August 1992- February 1997: Director, Family and Children's Services Division; Minnesota Department of Human Services

Led and directed state public child welfare programs in an 87 county administered human services system, including: family preservation and family support programs, child protection, out of home placement, adoption, Indian Child Welfare; programs for homeless, pregnant and parenting adolescents, and independent living skills; ensured federal and state protections for children, compliance with federal and state laws and regulations; developed, monitored and revised budgets to support program initiatives; analyzed and proposed legislative proposals to strengthen and improve statewide policy for children and families; directed existing services, developed and implemented new initiatives, and provided statewide leadership on family and children's issues; managed statewide competency based training system for county and private agency child welfare professionals and foster and adoptive parents; wrote and obtained federal grant to promote the adoption of African American children in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties; in collaboration with leadership from both counties, implemented successful program that dramatically increased permanency through adoption of African American children.

May 1990- August 1992: Supervisor, Adolescent Services and Child Care; Minnesota Department of Human Services

Supervised the development, administration and implementation of statewide child care and adolescent programs; designed and implemented comprehensive new programs for drug exposed infants and their families; developed, monitored state budget initiatives; recruited, hired, supervised and evaluated staff.

August 1987- May 1990: Coordinator Pregnant Adolescent Continuing Education (PACE), Minneapolis Public Schools

Administered city-wide educational and prenatal program for pregnant students grades 6-12; identified, developed and supported implementation of community resources for students and their families; promoted collaborative relationships and partnerships to enhance services for pregnant and parent adolescents.

August 1984- May 1987: Regional Director, Prince George's County, Associated Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.

Administered and managed comprehensive social services, community outreach programs in 16 decentralized county sites in collaboration with local parishes; managed foster care and adoption

services, emergency assistance, transition and emergency housing services; developed and implemented housing program for elderly residents; hired, supervised, managed office staff.

May 1983- August 1984: Supervisor, Southeast Community Office, Associated Catholic Charities, Washington, D.C.

Developed, implemented and supervised new community based branch office to meet local parish needs; administered emergency assistance, adoption, school counseling and social work services; collaborated with community agencies to enhance service delivery; developed and implemented new initiatives based on needs of children and families served.

May 1978- May 1983: Supervisor Adoption and Emergency Services, Catholic Charities  
Supervised the delivery of crisis and emergency assistance services at central office location; supervised adoption, family recruitment, home study, placement, and post placement adoption services.

August 1969-May 1978: Caseworker, Catholic Charities

Provided case work services to children in out of home placement; coordinated discharge planning and family reunification; planned and implemented foster parent training activities; provided orientation, family preparation activities for adoptive applicants; supported adoptive placements, provided post placement adoption services and finalized legal adoptions; provided counseling and support to birth parents.

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

2004- Present: National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA), Executive Committee; Washington, D.C.

2002- Present: Board of Directors, Black Administrators in Child Welfare

Executive Committee, Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission  
Wisconsin Commission on Children, Families and the Courts  
Past Chair, Wisconsin State Training Council